

<p style="text-align: center;">MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reading Excellence Act Grant Program Application</p>
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PART III: PROGRAM NARRATIVE

The Massachusetts Department of Education has organized this section of its application to correspond to the components required under the Instructions, sections A. through F., of the Fiscal Year 1999 Application for Grants, Reading Excellence Act. The content of the application addresses the requirements set forth in the Reading Excellence Act legislation's selection criteria and the competitive priority, as defined in the Secretary's criteria for Significance, Quality of Project Design, Quality of Project Service, Adequacy of Resources, Quality of the Management Plan, and Quality of Project Evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Context

Education Reform, Standards, and Assessment in Reading

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a long and rich history of commitment to public education. In the 17th and 18th centuries, many Massachusetts towns established free schools. In 1784, it was declared at a Boston town meeting that the city's schools should serve:

the Benefit of the Poor and the Rich; that the Children of all, partaking of equal Advantages and being placed upon an equal Footing, no Distinction might be made among them in the Schools on account of the different Circumstances of their Parents, but that the Capacity & natural Genius of each might be cultivated & improved for the future benefit of the whole Community.

Five years later the Commonwealth of Massachusetts adopted this high ideal by passing the nation's first comprehensive school law, requiring every town to support an elementary school.

From the establishment of the first public school in 1784 to the enactment of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 to present day, the citizens of Massachusetts have continuously demonstrated strong support and active involvement in the education of their children. The success of the Education Reform Act of 1993 can be attributed at least in part to the strong partnership forged among the citizens of Massachusetts, including the business community, the Department of Education, the Board of Education, the State Legislature, and the Governor.

Statewide Standards for Reading and English Language Arts

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 established new criteria for accountability and performance in public education. The Act states that:

the board shall direct the commissioner to develop academic standards for the core subjects of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English, foreign languages and the arts. The standards shall clearly set forth the skills, competencies and knowledge expected to be possessed by all students ... and shall be formulated so as to set high expectations of student performance.

In response to this requirement, committees of educators, parents, and other community members were convened by Department of Education (MADOE) staff to develop Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in the core subjects. These curriculum frameworks are pivotal documents for the improvement of teaching and learning in Massachusetts public schools.

Of particular relevance to the Reading Excellence Program is the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework approved by the Board of Education 1997. This framework was highly rated by the Fordham Foundation, the Council for Basic Education, and the American Federation of Teachers. The first chapter, entitled Early Literacy: Success in Reading by Grade Three, begins with this quote:

The Massachusetts Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all students become effective readers by the end of third grade.

The five sections of this chapter describe:

- ◆ phonics and whole language approaches;
- ◆ characteristics of effective early literacy programs;
- ◆ the role of writing in learning to read;
- ◆ literacy needs of special populations, including children learning English and those with disabilities;
- ◆ reading and writing skills introduced and developed from preschool to grade 3

See Attachment A for pages illustrating the attention given to early literacy and the research foundation of this Framework.

Statewide Assessments in Reading

The Education Reform Act also requires that:

The board shall adopt a system for evaluating the performance of both public school districts and individual schools to assess the extent to which schools succeed in improving or fail to improve student acquisition of the skills, competencies and knowledge called for in the academic standards and embodied in the curriculum frameworks. In addition, comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students shall be conducted at least in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades. Said diagnostic assessments shall identify academic achievement levels of all students in order to inform teachers, parents, administrators and the students themselves, as to individual academic performance.

In response to this requirement, MADOE contracted with Advanced Systems, an independent assessment development firm, in 1995 to develop the customized Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Hundreds of public school teachers worked with Advanced Systems and MADOE staff to create MCAS test questions and later to score student test responses.

The result of this collaborative effort is an assessment system that measures the performance of students, schools, and districts on the academic learning standards contained in the Curriculum Frameworks. Consistent with this purpose, results of the MCAS are reported according to

performance levels in relation to the four established performance standards: *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Failing*. School and district results are reported as the number and percentage of students attaining each performance level at each grade and in each subject area.

The English Language Arts Curriculum Framework identifies three content strands that serve as the foundation for the MCAS test: language, literature, and composition. The learning standards in the language and literature strands are assessed by using reading passages followed by related questions. The composition strand standards are assessed by student responses to writing prompts. Attachment B.

Results of Statewide Assessments in Grade 4 Reading and English Language Arts

In the spring of 1998 Massachusetts administered tests based on the academic standards in the Curriculum Frameworks at grades 4, 8, and 10 for the first time. Please see Table 1 for the English Language Arts results.

Table 1

1998 Statewide MCAS Performance Level Results for All Students					
Grade Level	MCAS content	Advanced %	Proficient %	Needs Improvement %	Failing %
Grade 4	English Language Arts	1	19	66	15
Grade 8	English Language Arts	3	52	31	13
Grade 10	English Language Arts	5	33	34	26

While 15% of fourth grade students statewide performed at the Failing level, in schools eligible for Reading Excellence funds, the percentage of students performing at the Failing level is over 40%. The most needy schools report failure rates of up to 85%. Behind all the numbers and Tables are individual children who are struggling to read.

MADOE and the state government responded immediately to the need for improving reading skills by offering three state-funded grant programs:

- ◆ the Massachusetts Early Literacy Intervention Program awards funds to train teachers in research-based techniques to provide individualized tutoring to at-risk first graders;
- ◆ the Individual Tutoring in Reading grant program finances extended-time individual tutoring for low achieving fourth graders; and
- ◆ the Massachusetts Academic Support Services Program provides individual and small group reading instruction to low performing K-11 graders.

On April 22, 1999 the Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives announced that \$76.4 million had been included in the proposed FY 2000 House budget for expanding early childhood programs. The whole goal, the whole notion, the entire objective here is to promote literacy at every possible stage of early childhood, from the cradle to grade one. According to figures released by the House Ways and Means Committee, funds will be allocated as follows:

- ◆ \$25 million for kindergarten developments grants; money will be split between enhancing existing programs and expanding half-day programs to full day;
- ◆ \$24 million for expansion of early childhood care and pre-school education; of that, \$20 million will be earmarked for low-income and the neediest children;
- ◆ \$10.2 million for an Early Literacy Program which will provide grants to schools to hire extra first grade reading teachers as an incentive for comprehensive literacy reform;
- ◆ \$10 million for school health services;
- ◆ \$4.7 million for school nutrition programs;

- ◆ \$2 million for expansion of the Parent-Child Home Program, a home-based parenting and family literacy program that has been successfully piloted in Massachusetts cities.

Every effort was made to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency, were included in MCAS testing. MADOE adhered to IDEA requirements that students with disabilities participate in all district- and statewide assessments. Some students participated with accommodations while others took a locally-developed alternate assessment. Limited English proficient students with three or fewer years of school in the United States were not required to take the English Language Arts MCAS. However, there was concern that student language proficiency may not be accurately known, preventing some students from taking the test who could actually participate. Therefore, at its January 1999 meeting, the Board of Education authorized the Department to develop an English language proficiency assessment that would be field tested in FY 00 and implemented in FY 01. See Table 2 for participation rates and performance levels.

Table 2

Grade 4 Student Participation in MCAS English Language Arts in 1998			
Student Status	Enrolled	% Tested	Performance Level
All Students	76,365	97.4%	Advanced 1% Proficient 19% Needs Improvement 65% Failing 15%
Regular Education Students	60,977	99.6%	Advanced 1% Proficient 22% Needs Improvement 69% Failing 8%
Students with Disabilities	12,497	94.1%	Advanced 0% Proficient 3% Needs Improvement 54% Failing 43%
Limited English Proficient	2,891	66.0%	Advanced 0% Proficient 2% Needs Improvement 47% Failing 51%

There is concern with the low performance levels of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. This concern is heightened for Reading Excellence-eligible schools in large urban communities where there is a high percentage of such students.

MADOE has created grant programs and professional development opportunities so that school districts can provide equal access to the kinds of instruction and curriculum recommended in the Curriculum Frameworks for all students. Since 1996, MADOE has offered the following grant programs:

- ◆ Supporting Access to the Curriculum Grant Program to ensure that students with disabilities are given the opportunity to attain the same high standards as their peers (federal Special Education funds, \$10 million between FY96 and FY99).

- ◆ Professional Development contract to The Education Alliance for Equity and Excellence of the Regional Education Laboratory at Brown University for the alignment of local curriculum for limited English proficient students with the state English Language Arts Curriculum Framework (\$75,000 in FY99).
- ◆ Professional Development contracts to four colleges and universities statewide to provide institutes for PreK-12 educators and college faculty on serving the needs of culturally diverse learners and aligning curriculum with the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework (\$1 million FY96 through FY00).

Statewide Assessments in Reading at Grade 3

Because of the Commissioners and the Board of Educations desire for the state to identify and assist children with reading difficulties before they take the grade 4 MCAS tests, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills was administered statewide to all third graders in 1997, 1998, and 1999. This standardized achievement test yields important information in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. The Iowa Test results below include students with disabilities and limited English proficient students who were enrolled in a Transitional Bilingual Education Program or received English as a Second Language support and were recommended to enter regular education in grade 4. See Table 3 for participation rates and Table 4 for results.

Table 3

Grade 3 Iowa Test of Basic Skills in Reading				
Student Status	Number Enrolled		Percent Tested	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
All Students	65,046	67,233	99%	97%
Students with Disabilities	6,423	5,783	92%	96%
Limited English Proficient	3,254	4,582	58%	42%

The Board of Education acted on a recommendation by then Interim Commissioner David P. Driscoll, and decided to increase the numbers of LEP students participating in the Iowa Test, so that schools would know the reading skills and needs of these students. At its January 1999 meeting, the Board voted that: 1) all LEP students who entered school in the United States in at least grade 1 will take the grade 3 Iowa Test; and 2) the test results for those students not being recommended for regular education will be given to parents and schools for diagnostic purposes, but the results will not be added into the districts overall score.

Table 4

<i>Iowa Test of Basic Skills Reading Comprehension Results for Subgroups of Grade 3 Students</i>												
Subgroup	Number of Students		No Results		Pre-Reader		Basic Reader		Proficient Reader		Advanced Reader	
	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998
Students tested under routine conditions	60,046	67,233	1%	2%	4%	4%	20%	20%	50%	51%	25%	23%
Enrolled in the same district since first grade	52,242	54,057	1%	1%	3%	3%	19%	19%	51%	52%	26%	24%
Students with special needs tested under non-routine conditions	6,423	5,783	8%	2%	22%	28%	38%	41%	28%	27%	4%	3%
Students with Limited English Proficiency	3,254	4,582	42%	58%	15%	8%	26%	19%	16%	14%	1%	2%

This Table demonstrates that over one-quarter of third graders performed at the *Pre-Reader* and *Basic Reader* levels. In Reading Excellence eligible schools, almost one half of third graders performed at the lowest levels.

The need is clear. The majority of students in Massachusetts high poverty elementary schools do not have the reading skills necessary for school success. If they are not taught to read independently and well by the end of third grade, they will not be able to read challenging material in higher grades and will be less inclined to read for enjoyment throughout their lives. Support to these schools and children through the Reading Excellence Program will contribute significantly to existing State efforts on behalf of its neediest children.

Reading Research in Massachusetts:

The Massachusetts Literacy Study

With the administration of MCAS in English Language Arts and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the MADOE now has access to a rich source of data about student performance in literacy. In 1997, Department staff specializing in literacy noted that Iowa Basic Skills test data identified a group of high-poverty urban elementary schools in which students achieved significantly higher scores than other similar schools. MADOE therefore decided to undertake a study to identify the literacy practices, instructional strategies, and other school factors that contributed to school scores that were at least 20 points higher than the districts score. RMC Research Corporation, as a partner of the Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, designed and conducted the *Massachusetts Literacy Study* in conjunction with MADOE staff.

From December 1997 through February 1998, researchers collected information from school staff, principals, and superintendents to understand what contributed to each schools success. In September 1998 the *Massachusetts Literacy Study* report was released. The study identified nine successful literacy practices, instructional strategies, and other school factors that contributed to high student scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. These findings dovetail with the results of other current reading research.

These important research findings were presented to over 300 teachers and school administrators at a January 1999 Early Literacy Conference, co-sponsored annually by MADOE and the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center. Participants responded enthusiastically to the findings. One principal wrote on the conference evaluation sheet, This is just the information I need to make our whole school a place where every student can learn to read and love doing it! MADOE is now developing plans with the LAB to disseminate results of the *Massachusetts Literacy Study* and its connection to current research to schools across the state. Schools

interested in applying for Reading Excellence Program funds will learn about current local and national literacy research at grant writing technical assistance sessions. In addition, MADOE is engaged in using the *Massachusetts Literacy Study*'s findings, along with other current research about early reading, to develop protocols to assess the extent of identified school-based practices. These protocols will be used by Reading Excellence schools as self-study tools, by the Reading Excellence external evaluator as a means of collecting qualitative data about making reading the instructional focus of the school, and by MADOE staff to help schools institutionalize gains in reading so that schools may continue these gains after grant support ends.

The *Massachusetts Literacy Study* focused on twelve elementary schools that scored significantly higher than other schools in their districts on the Grade 3 Iowa Test of Basic Skills in Reading administered in 1997. The study yielded nine themes that were characteristic of strong performance in literacy achievement:

1. Literacy is taught through a range of techniques that combine literature-based and phonics approaches and provides students with continual opportunities for applying literacy skills.
2. There is a school emphasis on reading and literacy that results in considerable time spent on literacy instruction as well as extended reading and writing time to increase exposure to literacy.
3. Reading instruction occurs in small groups so that teachers can focus on students' individual needs.
4. School staff actively use student work and assessments, and other types of data to inform and improve instruction.
5. Test preparation, practice, teaching, and test-taking skills instruction for students are given serious attention at these schools.
6. The schools are student-centered organizations with clear academic expectations.
7. Professional development supports real change in instruction and continuous deepening of teacher knowledge.

8. School staff have created effective ways to work together and support each other; principals demonstrate their appreciation for the experience and dedication of staff and support them in many ways.
9. School staff view parents as literacy partners and have defined important roles for them.

Several themes (specifically, school emphasis on reading and literacy, the use of student work and assessment to inform and improve instruction, schools as student-centered organizations with clear academic expectations, focused professional development, and support from colleagues and administration) demonstrate how schools can develop systems and practices that support student achievement in literacy.

Connecting *Massachusetts Literacy Research Study* with Current National Research:

Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children

The Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children was established by the National Academy of Sciences to examine the prevention of reading difficulties through a project that studied "the effectiveness of interventions for young children who are at risk of having problems learning to read." The nine themes identified in the *Massachusetts Literacy Study* are congruent with research findings of the National Research Council, including its recommendations that:

- (a) reading curricula at the first through third grade levels incorporate explicit instruction and practice in reading/linguistic concepts, opportunity for independent and supported reading, writing, access to a wide variety of texts, and the use of at-home reading assignments, summer reading, parent and community involvement, and other support activities;
- (b) schools provide support for teachers at all grades and levels of experience in understanding literacy development through ongoing professional development, support from colleagues and specialists, and self-examination and reflection;

- (c) schools with large numbers of children at-risk for reading difficulties need rich resources including manageable class sizes and student-teacher ratios, high quality instructional materials in sufficient quantity, good school libraries, and ongoing professional development;
- (d) reading specialists and other specialized roles should communicate continuously with reading specialists, special educators, and classroom teachers; and coordinate their instructional practices with high quality classroom instruction and other specialized instruction including special education; and
- (e) training for preschool and primary grade teachers should build a strong knowledge base and experience in literacy development and instruction, as well as ongoing support, that enables them to help all children become successful readers. A few examples of specific teacher education curricula that support a strong knowledge base include:
 - ◆ information about language development as it relates to literacy;
 - ◆ procedures for ongoing, in-class assessment of children's reading abilities;
 - ◆ information on how to interpret and modify instruction according to norm-referenced and individually-referenced assessment outcomes, including in-class assessments and progress monitoring measures used by specialists;
 - ◆ information about the learning and curricular needs of diverse learners (students with disabilities, with limited English proficiency, and with English-language dialect differences);
 - ◆ information about the design features and requirements of a reading curriculum;
 - ◆ information about how teachers apply research judiciously to their practices, how to update their research knowledge; and
 - ◆ information about how to maintain and promote motivation to read and positive attitudes toward reading.

Beating the Odds in Teaching All Children to Read:

Lessons from Effective Schools and Exemplary Teachers

The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) recently examined which school factors and teacher factors were characteristic of schools that are most effective in terms of student reading growth and achievement in the primary grades. The study was conducted with fourteen schools in Virginia, Minnesota, Colorado, and California. The findings from the study have been incorporated into CIERA's materials, including the widely distributed *Every Child A Reader: Applying Reading Research in the Classroom*.

The findings from the study are consistent with and add further dimension to the *Massachusetts Literacy Study*. CIERA researchers emphasize the following school factors as key:

- ◆ Building communication within and across grades
- ◆ Regular and systematic evaluation of student progress
- ◆ Implementing small group interventions
- ◆ Ongoing professional development related to early reading, including school visits and sustained training
- ◆ Collaborative organization of reading resource, Title I and special education teachers
- ◆ Concerted outreach to parents

The teacher factors that the CIERA research emphasized were:

- ◆ Effective home communication
- ◆ High task engagement of students
- ◆ More time spent in small group instruction
- ◆ More time in independent reading
- ◆ Coaching with word recognition strategies, including phonics

Again, there are strong similarities in school and teacher factors between the CIERA work, the advice from the Prevention of Reading Difficulties project, and the *Massachusetts Literacy Study* that define the practices MADOE will support through Reading Excellence Local Reading Improvement (LRI) subgrants.

In addition to the types of school-wide and classroom features described above, CIERA materials also outline key features of effective primary grade reading programs that deal directly with the nature of literacy content, and which will be included in the protocols we are designing for assessing practice. Those features are:

- ◆ a firm foundation of oral language and communication,
- ◆ extensive opportunities to practice phonics analysis and word recognition,
- ◆ early instruction on letter names and sounds, phonemic awareness, and print concepts,
- ◆ repeated use of high frequency words in authentic reading and writing activities,
- ◆ scaffolded instruction with comprehension strategies,
- ◆ many opportunities to write for meaningful purposes and audiences, and
- ◆ classroom activities that engage childrens interests and support positive self-perceptions of their growing abilities as readers.

Using Research in Massachusetts for a Strong Reading Excellence Program

The Massachusetts Department of Education is fortunate to have research that is solid, current, and locally relevant, and which provides clear guidance for practitioners. Research findings converge around key ingredients of successful reading programs. With the support of Reading Excellence funds, MADOE will be able to promote consistent literacy practices that can be sustained beyond the life of this grant. Through state-sponsored technical assistance and LRI subgrants, MADOE will provide resources and staff development that is consistent with that guidance, and then assess the degree to which specific school s implementation of reading programs raises student achievement.

COMPONENTS A-F

A. Reading and Literacy Partnership

The Governor and the Chief State School Officer have established a Reading and Literacy Partnership. Partnership members include:

Governor, Argeo Paul Cellucci

Chief State School Officer, Dr. David P. Driscoll

Senate Chair of Education, Arts, and Humanities, Robert Antonioni - D

House Chair of Education, Arts, and Humanities, Harold Lane - D

Ranking Senate Republican on the Joint Committee for Education, Arts, and Humanities, Senator Michael Knapik

Ranking House Republican on the Joint Committee for Education, Arts, and Humanities, Representative Robert Hargraves

Representatives of:

Local districts eligible to receive subgrants

Thomas Payzant, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools

Pamela Mason, Principal of Greenleaf School, Haverhill

James Shiminski, Title I Director for Pittsfield Public Schools

Community-Based Organizations

Anne Serino, Director of Operation Bootstrap, Adult Reading Program

Fran Collins, Executive Office, Mental Health and Retardation Center of
Cambridge and Somerville, Cambridge Head Start

State Directors of federal programs supporting reading

Kathy Rodriguez, Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium Coordinator

Barbara Solomon, Title I State Director

Marcia Mittnacht, State Director of Special Education

Elisabeth Schaefer, Director of Early Learning

Robert Bickerton, Adult Basic Education Director

Teachers

Vera Johnson, Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Boston

Bruce Penniman, Massachusetts Teacher of the Year

Parents

Susan Kiernan, Milton

Family Literacy Providers

Nancy Hoe, Even Start Early Childhood Coordinator, Cambridge

Susan Klaw, Family Literacy Project Excel, Boston

Others

Dr. William Harp, Professor at the University of Massachusetts/Lowell
Chair of the International Reading Association Special Interest Group on
Assessment

i. Partnership members assisted in the development of the State plan:

- ◆ MADOE mailed the federal requirements for the grant application and a questionnaire to Partnership members asking for input. Members responded both in writing and by telephone.
- ◆ Superintendent Payzants staff who lead the Annenberg Challenge for Boston Schools met with the MADOE staff. Their description of how a large urban center has made literacy its New Instructional Focus was most helpful.
- ◆ James Shiminski, Title I Director for the largest city in western Massachusetts, met with Board of Education members and MADOE staff to share Pittsfields success with the Parent-Child Home Program which promotes family and early childhood education through home visits.
- ◆ The State Title I Director is responsible for administering the CSRD program for the MADOE. She provided valuable insight from her experience as an early implementer of CSRD. The USDOEs *CSRD in the Field: An Early Report* released in March 1999 has been very useful.
- ◆ The State Director of Special Education discussed how her recently awarded State Improvement Grant will contribute to teacher preparation for reading instruction and how technical assistance for Special Education directors can reinforce requirements pertaining to special education.
- ◆ The Directors of Early Learning, Adult Basic Education, Family Literacy, and Even Start meet regularly with the director of this grant as part of a standing committee called the Cross-Cluster Coordination Team. Recent agendas for these meetings have focused on the Reading Excellence Program application.
- ◆ Dr. William Harp of UMass at Lowell and Chair of the International Reading Association Special Interest Group on Assessment recently met with Department staff to advise on the Reading Excellence Program evaluation plan.

ii. Partnership members will be involved in the selection of Local Reading Improvement (LRI) subgrants (Attachment C) and Tutorial Assistance (TA) subgrants (Attachment D) by serving on grant review teams.

iii. Partnership members will assist in the oversight and evaluation of LRI and TA subgrants by:

- ◆ participating in MADOE sponsored network meetings, offered twice a year, for Reading Excellence Coordinators of LRI grants;
- ◆ serving on teams to review materials required of LRI and TA subgrantees, such as evaluation and assessment data, year-end reports and budgets for the new fiscal year;
- ◆ participating in the selection of the Reading Excellence Program external evaluator and advising MADOE regarding the implementation of evaluation report recommendations for program improvement.

B. Professional Development Activities, Parental Involvement, Subgrants

i. MADOE assures that professional development activities related to reading instruction will be coordinated with other Federal, State and local funds.

Within MADOE, the Associate Commissioner for the Education Improvement Group supervises and coordinates the work of several administrative units that support literacy initiatives. These units include Adult Basic Education, Early Learning Services, Learning Support Services, Teacher Preparation, Professional Development, Instruction and Curriculum Services, and Assessment and Accountability. The Associate Commissioner oversees state-funded grant programs and state-sponsored professional development activities for literacy and links these programs with Federal grants and programs under her supervision.

The Administrator for the Instruction and Curriculum Services (ICS) unit is the Reading Excellence Program director. The ICS administrator immediately supervises directors of the Federal Title I and Title VII, Goals 2000, and Emergency Immigrant programs; the directors of the Massachusetts Equity, Essential Skills, and Early Literacy programs; and the director of the English Language Arts, Foreign Languages, History/Social Science, and the Arts curriculum frameworks. Regular meetings of these directors include planning and coordinating the implementation of professional development activities. An example of coordinating state and Reading Excellence funds is the Early Literacy grant program. For three years the state budget has provided over \$1 million per year for the purpose of providing early intervention literacy programs designed as pre-special education referral intervention for children who are at risk of failing to read in first grade. Early Literacy grant recipients will be invited to join the Reading Excellence network meetings to learn about current research and practices and share their experience of grant implementation.

The Administrator for ICS serves on two standing committees within MADOE: the Special Education Steering Committee, chaired by the State Director for Special Education, and the Cross-Cluster Coordinating Team, comprised of the State Directors for Adult Basic Education, Early Childhood Education, the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium, and Even Start. Monthly agendas of both committees include discussions of how the programs can collaborate on professional development offerings to school personnel and parents. An example of staff and fund coordination is the plan to provide training for Reading Excellence schools to develop high quality family literacy services. This training

will be supported by \$20,000 from the Massachusetts Even Start Statewide Family Literacy grant and \$50,000 from the Reading Excellence grant. Consultant stipends and training supplies will be supported by state early childhood funds.

The MADOE assures that subgrantees will coordinate professional development activities related to reading with other Federal, State, and local funds through requirements in the LRI subgrant application. The Reading Excellence external evaluator hired by MADOE will interview the district staff to document actual practice. The chart below indicates the sections of the LRI request for proposal which address this issue.

REA requirement B.i.	LRI Section	LRI page #
ensure professional development is coordinated with other funds and used effectively	Purpose and priorities Part II: budget narrative Part IIIA: 4 Part IIIB: 4d 5	pages 1,2 page 6 page 7 page 9 page 11,12

- ii. **The needs of teachers and other instructional staff to improve their ability to teach reading will be addressed through requirements of LRI and TA applications and the effectiveness of such activities will be assessed by the Reading Excellence Program external evaluator.**

The chart below indicates the sections of the LRI and TA request for proposals which addresses this issue.

REA requirement B. ii.	LRI Section	LRI page #
How activities will address needs of teachers and will teach students to read	Purpose and priorities Part IIIA: 2, 4 Part IIIB: 2 a, b 3 a 4 a, b, c, d 5	pages 1,2 page 7 page 8 page 8 page 8, 9 page 11,12

REA requirement B. ii.	TA Section	TA page #
How activities will address needs of teachers and will teach students to read	Purpose and priorities Part III: 2 a, 3 c, e, k 5	page 1 page 4 page 5 page 6

For a complete description of the Reading Excellence Program evaluation, see sections D. iv. and F. of this application.

- iii. **The extent to which activities will prepare teachers in all major components of reading instruction is described as follows:**

Schools must submit an agreement signed by an expert person or entity that will provide professional development in a research-based reading program. Grant applications must include evidence that the selected program(s) will provide training in all major components of reading instruction, including phonemic

awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, reading comprehension, and motivation.

The Reading Excellence evaluation will provide evidence of teacher preparation.

The chart below indicates the sections of the LRI request for proposal that addresses this issue.

REA requirement B. iii.	LRI section	LRI page #
Activities will prepare teachers in all major components of reading	Purpose and priorities Part IIIA: 2, 4 Part IIIB: 4a, b, c 5	pages 1, 2 page 7 page 8, 9 page 11, 12

iv. Technology will be used to enhance reading and literacy professional development activities for teachers in the following ways:

MADOE will host a website for Reading Excellence Program participants. The website will include a calendar of professional development offerings, research-based teacher skill development guides, and links to other reading resources as well as areas for program management information. MADOE will be able to give listserv capability to grant sites through MassEd.Net, the states subsidized Internet service for public educators. A custom listserv tool will allow the program to use a number of listservs created by participating sites and users. Some listservs may be moderated to facilitate instructional, curricular, and assessment exchanges among educators. The Technology Plan submitted to MADOE yearly by each district ensures the Department that each of the potential subgrant recipients has hardware, software, and adequate professional development to access the website and participate in the listserv.

v. Parents will have opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities by:

- ◆ accessing family literacy services, including adult literacy education;
- ◆ receiving training offered by schools on how to help their children with schoolwork, particularly reading;
- ◆ volunteering to be reading tutors and receiving training to do so;
- ◆ serving on the School Council where decisions related to instruction and curriculum, use of school funds, and grant implementation are made;
- ◆ accessing services provided through school collaboration with community based organizations, such as libraries, Head Start, and adult education.

Parents will be informed of these opportunities through brochures distributed by the school district, newspaper announcements, and flyers posted in public spaces such as libraries and health clinics.

vi. MADOE assures that only Local Reading Improvement (LRI) and Tutorial Assistance (TA) grants that meet all requirements of this part will be funded.

Schools in need of improvement have been identified by using data from the 1998 MCAS and the 1998 Grade 3 Iowa Test of Basic Skills in Reading. Attachment E.

Determination of poverty level is based on low income data collected as of October 1, 1998. LRI grant applications will be mailed only to schools that have:

- A. at least one school identified for school improvement under section 1116c of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act;
- B. The largest or second largest number of poverty children who are counted under section 11249c of the ESES, in comparison to all other districts in Massachusetts; and
- C. the highest and second highest school-age poverty rate, in comparison to all other districts in Massachusetts;

TA grant applications will be sent to the school districts above and to those with at

least one school in an empowerment zone or enterprise community.

MADOE assures that subgrantees will use practices based on scientifically-based reading research. LRI and TA grant applications include Appendix A which provides information about using practices based on scientifically-based reading research, including the Continuum of Evidence Effectiveness from the USDOE guidance. To ensure that LRI and TA grants will be of high quality, MADOE will provide four technical assistance workshops for teams of school and districts staff during the second and third weeks of September. Superintendents will receive notice of the workshops in early August 1999 at the same time they receive the grant applications. During these full-day workshops, district teams will learn more about both Reading Excellence Program subgrants and requirements; how the findings of NRCs *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* can assist in grant planning; how to select a reading program based on scientific research; how to develop family literacy services and form partnerships with CBOs; and how to plan budgets for a multi-year grant. MADOE staff will work with the following partners to plan and implement these technical assistance workshops: The Regional LAB at Brown, through a subcontract with RMC; the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center at EDC; institutions of higher education; family literacy service providers; and the Massachusetts Reading Association.

The first LRI submission date is early November 1999 so that schools will have sufficient time to determine student and staff needs, research reading programs, and select reading program(s) that best fit identified needs. For schools needing more planning time, there is a second submission date of early May 2000 and three more technical assistance sessions in February 2000.

Reading Excellence grant reviewers will be trained in the use of the scoring rubric attached to the LRI and TA subgrants and will follow the grant review process described in detail in section C. Grants will be awarded only to schools that receive a good or exemplary in each category of the scoring rubric.

- vii. Subgrants will be awarded in both rural and urban areas to the extent practicable.** Because there are eligible school districts in rural and urban areas across the state, the potential exists for distributing grant awards accordingly. MADOE is encouraging applicants from all parts of the state and from communities with both large and small populations by offering technical assistance workshops in geographically diverse locations.
- viii. The process for selecting Reading and Literacy Partnership members:** Commissioner David Driscoll and Governor Paul Cellucci selected the Reading and Literacy Partnership members in March. The Director for this grant had previously met with MADOE staff knowledgeable in the field of literacy to solicit their nominations. Care was taken to select members from the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium and from existing groups with interest in literacy.

C. Subgrant Assurances

MADOE assures that each LEA to which a subgrant is made will comply with requirements of C i, ii, iii, and iv.

The LRI and TA grant applications, the award process, and the award criteria ensure that only high-quality programs will receive Reading Excellence funds. Proposals will be reviewed using the process described below. Scoring rubrics are attached to the LRI and TA subgrant applications.

1. LRI proposals will be due in early November 1999 for the first funding cycle and early May 2000 for the second cycle. TA proposals will be due in January 2000.
2. Grant review teams will be comprised of MADOE staff knowledgeable in early literacy, family literacy services, and school reform. Additional readers will include sabbatical teachers, members of the Reading and Literacy Partnership, and staff from the Northeast Regional LAB, the Comprehensive Center, and RMC Research Corporation. Prior to reviewing grants, readers will be trained on the intent of the Reading Excellence Program and the use of the scoring rubric.
3. Grants will be reviewed and rated using the scoring rubrics, which parallel the information, requested in the RFPs. Three or more readers will review and rate each grant and reach consensus on a score. Proposals that do not receive a good or exemplary score on any item will not be funded.
4. Consideration will be given to awarding grants to both rural and urban communities in different parts of the state.
5. The review team makes recommendations for grant awards to the Commissioner who presents them to the Board of Education for the final award decision. The chart below indicates the sections of the LRI request for proposal that address this issue.

REA requirement C.i. - iv.	LRI Section	LRI page #
C.i. Professional development	Purpose and priorities. Part II, budget narrative. Part III A, 2, 4. Part III B, 2 b 3 a 4 a, b ,d, e, i.	pages 1, 2 pages 6 pages 7 page 8 page 8 page 8, 9, 10
C.ii. Family literacy	Purpose and priorities. Part II, budget narrative. Part III A, 6 Part III B, 2 c 3 b 4 f	pages 1, 2 page 6 page 7 page 8 page 8 page 9
C.iii. Transition for Kindergartners	Purpose and priorities Part III A, 4 Part III B, 4g	pages 1, 2 page 7 page 10
C.iv. Additional reading support	Purpose and priorities Part III A, 4 Part III B, 4i	pages 1,2 page 7 page 10

D. Children With Reading Difficulties

MADOE assures that instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties as described in D.i. and D.ii.

By using the grant review process presented in section C, MADOE will only award funds to districts that score good or exemplary in areas related to the identification of students to receive services. In addition, the state evaluation will provide for continuous oversight by collecting data on the number of students referred for special education services and the number of students on IEPs in each school. If data reveal that children who are unable to read because of inadequate reading instruction are being inappropriately identified as needing special education services, MADOE will require that IDEA funds be used to train IEP teams in special education eligibility.

REA requirements	LRI Section	LRI page #
D.i. At risk of referral	Purpose and priorities Part III A, 4 Part III B, 4h	pages 1, 2 page 7 page 10
D.ii. Finding of no disability	Purpose and priorities Part III A, 4 Part III B, 4h	pages 1, 2 page 7 page 10

E. Coordination and Promotion of State Literacy Programs and Grant Opportunities

i. MADOE will build on, and promote coordination among, literacy programs in the state (including federally funded programs such as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act), in order to increase the effectiveness of the programs in improving reading for adults and children and to avoid duplication of the efforts of the programs.

Over the past ten years the MADOE has made many connections across administrative units to improve literacy services to schools. Units involved with this effort include: the Office of the Commissioner; Instruction and Curriculum Services (including Title I, Bilingual Education, Goals 2000, and Comprehensive School Reform); Early Learning Services; Special Education; Office for Mathematics, Science and Technology; Adult and Community Learning Services; Teacher Preparation and Approval; Learning Support Services; Nutrition; Accountability and Targeted Assistance; and Professional Development. Coordination occurs through meetings and communication of intra-Department committees. These committees include a special education steering committee, a cross-administrative unit coordinating team, and the Commissioners administrative meetings. In addition, colleagues across the MADOE serve on reading

teams for grants, share successful strategies such as leadership institutes, coordinate teachers on sabbatical leave at the MADOE, and work together on reviewing programs in school districts. In December, the Instruction and Curriculum Services unit created a data base listing thirty-six literacy initiatives within the MADOE. This list helped build an understanding of the number of ways reading connects to our work with schools. Coordination will intensify under the Reading Excellence Program.

The Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium, under the direction of Adult and Community Learning Services, represents school districts, libraries, parents, businesses, volunteer organizations, and providers of family literacy, professional development, and adult education. The group has links to programs such as Reach Out and Read, Ready to Learn Television (a project of WGBH television), Federal Work Study, and the Boston Childrens Museum. The Massachusetts Reading Excellence Program will act as a catalyst for this partnership to connect with other literacy efforts across the state.

The Family and Community Learning Collaborative, comprised of many administrative units within MADOE, is coordinating a family involvement showcase for MADOE staff to heighten awareness of parent involvement efforts. Through this initiative there will be a better understanding of the extent of parent involvement in individual schools and school districts across the state. Reading Excellence grant recipients will be provided with information from this MADOE activity on ways to better involve parents in reading initiatives.

A recently funded Federal grant program, the Massachusetts State Improvement Grant: Project FOCUS, is coordinated by Special Education. It provides preservice and inservice

professional development for educators, as well as training for parents, students, and other interested stakeholders. One focus of this program is preparing teachers and parents with skills to ensure access to the curriculum frameworks in general education settings for all students, with an emphasis on literacy skills (including Braille literacy). The major themes of this program are parent collaboration, research to practice, interagency coordination, innovation, capacity building, and linkages to existing activities to maximize community, state, and federal resources. Project Focus and the Reading Excellence Program will collaborate to provide professional development and increase parental involvement for the purpose of teaching reading to students with disabilities.

Staff from Instruction and Curriculum Services, Accountability and Targeted Assistance, and Learning Support Services within MADOE have initiated discussions with another state entity, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, about collaborating on literacy projects. MADOE is also exploring how the Massachusetts AmeriCorps Reading Alliance can support Reading Excellence schools.

MADOE will build on the state funded restructuring initiatives coordinated over the past eight years, the new efforts of CSRD (Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration) program, and school planning initiatives of Title I and Goals 2000. Using knowledge developed from these programs, MADOE will support schools with a change process that will help them establish reading as the instructional focus, identify strengths and challenges, and develop a plan to realize their goals.

Outside the MADOE, but inside Massachusetts, there are connections that already exist and will be enhanced through this program. Products for schools will be developed by

drawing on the expertise of state leaders, local school districts, community based organizations, higher education, libraries, the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, and the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center. In January, the MADOE and the New England Comprehensive Center cosponsored a conference, *Early Reading: From Research to Practice*. The keynote speaker was Dorothy Fowler, a member of the National Research Council Committee. She presented the findings from the NRC *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children Report*. All conference participants received the related CIERA materials *Every Child a Reader*. This conference highlighted national literacy models such as the Early Literacy Learning Initiative, Success for All, and the Reading Success Network, as well as results of the *Massachusetts Literacy Study*.

The Reading Excellence Program has provided the incentive to form a new partnership with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. An expansion of Elder Affairs successful Reading Institute will bring trained elder volunteers into Reading Excellence schools to help young children identified as needing additional reading assistance. These elder volunteers will also help the parents of these children learn ways to support their children's reading at home.(Attachment G)

The Reading and Literacy Partnership and MADOE committees will coordinate literacy initiatives by continuing and forming partnerships across the State. Together, they will:

- ◆ produce resource guides that include curriculum materials for reading, software, and trade books to be used in content institutes, classrooms and at home;
- ◆ establish and maintain an electronic clearinghouse of information related to the Reading Excellence Act, including professional resources from national websites such as the International Reading Association and the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA);

- ◆ link schools that have successfully made reading their instructional focus with Reading Excellence schools; and
 - ◆ equip students, teachers, parents, and community leaders with the knowledge and means to expand the Reading Excellence Program in schools and communities through community service learning projects currently sponsored by MADOE.
- ii. In order to promote access to engaging reading material MADOE will:**
- ◆ assign its Librarian/Media Specialist on sabbatical leave to work with public library programs through the Massachusetts Library Association to coordinate and disseminate information about good books such as the Caldecott and Newbery Award books and American Library Association (ALA) Best; the Scientific American's Young Readers Book Awards, and the International Reading Association's *Children's Choices*, and *Teachers' Choices*; and encourage families to get library cards so they can read these books;
 - ◆ coordinate efforts to disseminate resources such as Reading is Fundamental (RIF), Read Across America Day, National Poetry Month, National Literacy Day, Book Week, Reach Out and Read, Spread the Word, America Reads, Boston Reads, and Reading Rainbow;
 - ◆ encourage community literacy efforts such as Reading at the Malls;
 - ◆ recognize Massachusetts authors of children's books and encourage schools to invite authors to their schools;
 - ◆ sponsor Early Literacy Content Institutes to provide intensive training on selecting and using engaging reading material;
 - ◆ encourage research efforts by schools and colleges in the area of selecting and using engaging reading materials through action research activities as part of the schools evaluation; and
 - ◆ establish and maintain an electronic clearinghouse of information about professional resources related to quality literacy materials, including state and national websites such as the American Library Association, the National Writing Project, the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Massachusetts Reading Association.

Work has already begun on many of these activities. MADOE is looking forward to the support of the Reading Excellence Program to continue these collaborative efforts.

iii. MADOE will inform eligible school districts of the availability of LRI and TA subgrants:

The grant applications will be mailed directly to Superintendents of all eligible school districts and put on the Department's website by mid-August 1999.

Principals of eligible schools will receive a notice of availability so they may discuss this grant opportunity with their superintendents and staff. In addition, the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium and Even Start coordinators at MADOE will mail a notice of LRI availability to their constituents so they may offer support to the superintendent in their catchment area.

MADOE will distribute a Public Announcement (Attachment H) to newspapers serving communities eligible to apply for TA grants. Potential tutorial service providers and parents will therefore be made aware of this upcoming opportunity. This public announcement will be published within 30 days of school districts receiving TA grant applications. Response to the public announcement will then be shared with relevant school districts.

iv. MADOE will assess and evaluate, on a regular basis, activities of LRI and TA grant recipients.

An important element of the Massachusetts Reading Excellence Program is an extensive evaluation of school activities and outcomes, with a focus on using the findings to enhance student improvement and educational staff effectiveness in learning and teaching reading, especially in grades K - 3.

MADOE will contract with an external evaluator to implement the evaluation plan, collect and analyze data from schools, prepare reports, and collaborate with MADOE to ensure that evaluation activities and reports support effective program implementation. The evaluator will be selected through a competitive process beginning with the release of a Request for Responses (RFR) in August 1999. The RFP will describe a framework for an evaluation plan developed by MADOE staff knowledgeable in literacy and education research and evaluation. Members of the MADOE Literacy Team and the Reading and Literacy Partnership will review and rate responses according to a scoring rubric and make a recommendation for hiring to the Commissioner by early October 1999.

The Reading Excellence Program evaluation plan focuses on three key program elements:

1. program planning, management, and institutionalization
2. professional development
3. student reading skill development

The evaluator will collect qualitative and quantitative data on these three elements from all Reading Excellence schools as indicated in the chart below.

REA requirement E. iv.	LRI Section	LRI page #
How the SEA will assess and evaluate LEA activities with respect to effectiveness	Assurance statement Part IIIB, 5	page 5 page 11

REA requirement E. iv.	TA Section	TA page #
How the SEA will assess and evaluate LEA activities with respect to effectiveness	Assurance statement Part III, 5	page 7 page 6

The Reading Excellence Program System (REPS) is being developed for quantitative data collection and submission. Local Reading Excellence Coordinators will be trained in the REPS to transfer accurate and timely information to MADOE. Data will be entered through a secure on-line interactive web-based form and be validated as it is entered. The data will be integrated into MADOE's data warehouse adhering to its data standards, ensuring accuracy and compatibility with the current data acquisition process.

Although schools will submit data to MADOE during the grant period only, the REPS will track individual student progress and integrate it with existing MADOE data until 2005, the year Reading Excellence students in Kindergarten reach grade 4 and take the MCAS in all subject areas. Both schools and MADOE will then be able to analyze data to determine if improvements in student reading skills are educationally significant.

Data on student reading skills in Reading Excellence schools will be compared yearly with data from a nominal comparison group of schools. The comparison group will be selected by the evaluator from Reading Excellence eligible schools that were not funded. Comparison data will be the Iowa Test on Basic Skills in Reading and the MCAS in English Language Arts and any other statewide assessment that may be developed during the years of this program. The purpose of data comparison is to learn if the Reading Excellence Program is effectively increasing student reading achievement.

Qualitative data will be collected during site visits by both the evaluator and MADOE liaisons. Interview protocols and classrooms observation forms for data collection will be developed and training provided to ensure consistency.

The evaluator will aggregate all data and prepare individual reports for each school and a composite report for school districts that have more than one Reading Excellence school. The evaluator will issue individual school progress reports within two months of receipt of quantitative data and within two months of site visits to collect qualitative data. School districts will also receive individual year end reports by August of each grant year. Yearly summative reports will inform MADOE of the progress of all schools toward implementing the three key program elements. The MADOE Literacy Team, the Reading and Literacy Partnership, and the evaluator will use reports to identify emerging themes influencing effective implementation. These themes will inform future technical assistance to schools and will be used as discussion topics at network meetings.

The schools will be the primary source of qualitative and quantitative data regarding two key program elements: #1 program planning, management, and institutionalization, and #3 student reading skill development. Providers of professional development in the research-based reading programs will be the source of data for element #2 professional development. Evaluators will collect data using an adaptation of tools currently used for evaluating MADOE-sponsored Content Institutes.

While a high correlation between effective professional development and improved reading scores can be expected, MADOE is interested in learning what constitutes effective professional development for reading. Variables include training content derived from scientifically-based research, frequency and duration of sessions, and the nature of support for implementation. Participant prior knowledge and experience in teaching reading, motivation, attendance at training sessions, and perceived administrative support are equally important.

Professional development providers will submit pre- and post-training data regarding participant prior knowledge and knowledge gained. This data will also yield information about the training content, frequency and duration of sessions, and the nature of support for implementation. The evaluator will design a questionnaire to collect qualitative data from participants regarding their motivation to learn about teaching reading, perceived administrative support and the like. Local Reading Excellence Coordinators will submit attendance logs three times a year documenting participation of all educational staff. All data will be analyzed and incorporated into frequent individual school progress reports as well as the yearly summative reports.

F. Description of the instrument MADOE will use for assessments and evaluations.

MADOE will require that all Reading Excellence Program grant recipients use the same instruments to assess student reading skills. This will provide data for comparison of outcomes between the various reading programs used by the LRI subgrantees. Students reading skills will be assessed in: phonemic awareness, systemic phonics, fluency, reading comprehension, and motivation. While researching the best instruments to assess reading skills of young children, MADOE learned that some test publishers are revising or creating new products. Therefore, the instruments named in Table B of the LRI subgrant may not be the final ones required.

Instruments to evaluate program planning, management, and institutionalization will be developed by the external evaluator between October 1999 and January 2000 when the first schools begin implementing their Reading Excellence Programs. Instruments will include questionnaires, and interview and observation protocols.

Grant Management Plan

Preparing the Reading Excellence Program grant proposal has been a collaborative effort among the Governors office, the Commissioner of Education, the Chief of Staff, two Associate Commissioners, four administrators and ten staff from six units within MADOE. Members of the Reading and Literacy Partnership representing parents, public school teachers and administrators, legislators, higher education, and the business community have also been involved. Managing the grant will continue to be a collaborative effort coordinated by the Instruction and Curriculum Services unit of MADOE. Resumes can be found in Attachment I.

The Administrator for Instruction and Curriculum Services (ICS), Linda Martin, is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the Reading Excellence Program grant are implemented effectively and in accordance with Federal requirements. She will be the Reading Excellence Director and will dedicate 20% of her time to this role. Working with the MADOE budget office, she will manage the Federal grant funds. Ms. Martin will hire two professional staff with reading expertise for the ICS unit, supervise all ICS staff working on grant activities, and coordinate the work of staff on loan from administrators in other units. Dorothy Earle, a Supervisor in Instruction and Curriculum Services, is the Reading Excellence Coordinator; 85% of her time will be dedicated to this grant program. She will be immediately responsible for coordinating grant activities and will report to Linda Martin.

The key components of the Reading Excellence Program will be managed as follows:

Federal Liaison

Linda Martin, Administrator for Instruction and Curriculum Services and Reading Excellence grant director, will be the MADOE liaison to USDOE. She will be directly responsible to USDOE for preparing reports and responding to requests for program information.

Reading and Literacy Partnership

Dorothy Earle, Supervisor in Instruction and Curriculum Services and Reading Excellence grant coordinator, will be responsible for facilitating meetings and activities of the Reading and Literacy Partnership in collaboration with the Governors office. She will be assisted by Laurie Slobody, Reading Specialist in the Accountability and Targeted Assistance unit.

LRI and TA Subgrants

Dorothy Earle will coordinate all aspects of the LRI and TA subgrants including State requirements for technical administration and Federal requirements for effective implementation. Technical administration involves: releasing RFPs to eligible school districts; recruiting and training grant readers; coordinating the grant review process; preparing grant recommendations for the Commissioners review and the Board of Educations approval; facilitating the release of funds to schools; requesting and reviewing year-end reports; approving budget amendments; and managing records.

In order to support effective grant implementation in schools, Ms. Earle will lead a Literacy Team comprised of ten staff from seven MADOE administrative units, including Instruction and Curriculum Services, Early Learning Services, Assessment and Evaluation, Accountability and Targeted Assistance, Adult Basic Education, Teacher Preparation, Special Education, and Professional Development. In addition to the staff described above, MADOE sponsors a program for teachers to take a sabbatical leave from their schools and work as full time employees of MADOE for 2 years. Sabbatical teachers in English Language Arts, Library/Media, Special Education, Bilingual Education, and Education Technology will join MADOE in September 1999 and will be invited to participate in the Literacy Team.

The Literacy Team will be MADOE's internal steering committee for the Reading Excellence Program and all other MADOE literacy efforts. Six members of the Literacy Team will be liaisons to Reading Excellence schools. Liaisons will devote 20% of their time to this role. Reading Excellence liaisons will:

- ◆ provide technical assistance and resources to principals and Local Reading Excellence Coordinators regarding program management and establishing literacy as the instructional focus of the school;
- ◆ collaborate with the external grant evaluator to gather qualitative data during on-site school visits;
- ◆ assist schools in using formative evaluation report recommendations; and
- ◆ plan and implement five Reading Excellence network meetings.

Dorothy Earle will be supported in this aspect of her work by Laurie Slobody of the Accountability and Targeted Assistance unit at 10% of her time.

Professional Development

All state-sponsored professional development activities for school personnel will be coordinated by a professional staff person to be hired with Reading Excellence funds. This person will be knowledgeable, experienced, and current in the field of literacy. The major professional development activities are assessment training, family literacy training, Children's Literature Institutes, and network meetings. Coordination responsibilities include contracting consultants and planning the training content with them, securing training sites, notifying and registering participants, preparing conference folders, managing on-site follow-up activities, collaborating with the external evaluator to determine effectiveness, and arranging for bill payment. This person will be supported by Susan Wheltle at 10% of her time.

Program Evaluation

MADOE will hire a professional staff person by the mid-June with Title I funds to coordinate all aspects of the Reading Excellence evaluation, including preparing and releasing the RFR to hire an external evaluator; coordinating the selection process; developing a work plan and timelines for deliverables; managing the evaluators contract and payment schedule; and collaborating with Dorothy Earle and the Literacy Team so that formative evaluation reports will be disseminated and used effectively. The evaluation coordinator will be assisted by Kathe Kirkman of the Accountability and Evaluation unit at 10% of her time.

Competitive Priority

Massachusetts *Regulations for the Certification of Educational Personnel* will undergo revision and be submitted to the Board of Education for approval in the spring of 2000. The MADOE agenda for revision includes strengthening requirements for teachers knowledge of reading instruction, particularly for generalist certificates (early childhood, elementary generalist, middle school generalist, and special needs). The current regulations for elementary certificates require that the candidate demonstrate only knowledge of:...early literacy and the development of reading skills;... The revised regulations will require candidates for the generalist certificates to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to teach and assess such aspects of literacy as phonemic awareness, systemic phonics, reading fluency, and reading comprehension along with ability to select and teach appropriate forms of literature. This knowledge and these skills also will be reflected in the written and performance assessments required of candidates for these certificates.